

A NEW VARIETY OF *HAWORTHIA LIMIFOLIA* FROM NATAL

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(With Plates IX and X)

The typical form of *Haworthia limifolia* is from somewhere west of Delagoa Bay and was described by Marloth (1908). Prof. R. H. Compton has kindly sent me specimens from the Umbuluzi River Valley north of Stegi and also a form from near Gollé on the southern border of Swaziland. Herbarium records show that forms also occur near Barberton; the confluence of the Pongola and Pivaans River 20 miles east of Paulpietersburg; Ndumu, Zululand; Kosi Bay, and the Ubombo Mountains in Zululand. A photograph of a plant collected by Mr. E. R. Harrison 6 miles west of Somkele on the slopes of the Nkonyana Mountains, matches plants collected by me at Ngceba, north of the Black Umfolozi River, between the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe Game Reserves. This form is also reported to occur on the nTsuzi and Ulumbi hills which flank the Umfolozi Reserve on the north and south. Two plants have been collected from this area by Mr. H. Dent. Mr. A. F. Bruyns-Haylett also records it from the Mozaan River Valley between Swaziland and the Pongola River (Plate IX).

In 1956 two unusually robust plants, not agreeing with any previously recorded forms, were collected by the late Mr. F. Bayer in the Nongoma district of Zululand. They belong to the section *Limifoliae* Smith because of the leaves, which are spirally arranged in a tight rosette. However, the tubercles are irregularly arranged on both leaf surfaces and the characteristic transverse lines are not apparent (Plate X). It has been given the varietal name *H. limifolia* var. *gigantea* because of its exceptionally large size. The native name of this plant is "u mathithibala". It is of interest to record also that detached leaves of this plant can produce new plants even up to a year after rooting.

A great deal more information on the distribution and variability of *H. limifolia* is required before the true relationship of the various forms can be determined. The present species concept may comprise either a series of intergrading forms or varieties, or certain composite elements may merit species status. This account of one particular element is presented in the hope of stimulating further interest in this problem.

Haworthia limifolia Marloth var. **gigantea** M. B. Bayer var. nov.

Planta acaulescens, 23 cm. diam., fere 10 cm. alta. *Folia* circa 70 rosulata, spiralter disposita, fere 9·5 cm. longa, 3·4 cm. lata, ovato-lanceolata, acuminata, supra concava tuberculata, infra convexa tuberculata. *Pedunculus* simplex, 3 mm. diam., racemo incluso 75 cm. longus; pedicelli 2 mm. longi, 1 mm. diam.; perianthium 16 mm. longum.

Plant acaulescent, 23 cm. in diam., about 10 cm. high; stem about 4 cm. thick; stoloniferous. *Leaves* about 70 in a compact rosette, spirally arranged in 9 whorls, patent, recurved, tips ascending, firm, longest leaves 11 cm., average length 9·5 cm., 4 cm. broad at middle, average width 3·4 cm., 0·5 cm. thick, ovate-lanceolate, acuminate; face concave with an oblique marginal longitudinal ridge in upper three-quarters, purplish pink basal quarter, becoming dark green towards tip, upper three-quarters covered with numerous small, irregularly arranged light green tubercles 0·5 mm. in diam., tubercles occasionally arranged in irregular transverse rows, frequently in longitudinal rows towards the tip, tubercles often transversely confluent in lines up to 4 mm. long, nearly white on younger leaves; back convex, usually with a narrow oblique longitudinal depression, purplish pink at base passing to light green in the second quarter, dark green towards the tip, tubercles similar to those on the face but extending nearer to the base; keel oblique in upper third, produced by the depression on the lower leaf surface. *Peduncle* simple, terete 3 mm. in diam., 75 cm. long including the raceme, 32·5 cm. to the first floret, light green below; raceme 43 cm. long, 50 spirally arranged flowers and buds, 4 to 5 open at a time; pedicels 2 mm. long, 1 mm. in diam., erect green; sterile bracts 5, lowest 8 mm. long, 14 cm. from base of peduncle upper bracts 5—6 mm. long, 3—5 cm. apart; fertile bracts 6·5 mm. long, lanceolate, acuminate, green with pellucid white margin, nerve dark brown to reddish brown at tip. Perianth greenish white, 16 mm. long with cylindrical-hexagonal base 3 mm. across, constricted to 2·5 mm. above, not stipitate, ascending; 3 inner segments obtuse, nerve colour green, lower segments channelled, recurved about 90 degrees, patent, upper segment broad, recurved about 45 degrees, 3 outer segments slightly emarginate, tinged with pink at tips, nerve colour green, recurved about 90 degrees; stamens 5—6 mm. long, white. *Ovary* 4 mm. long, 2 mm. in diam., green; style 2 mm. long, light green, straight with a slightly capitate stigma.

DISTRIBUTION: Natal: Nongoma Distr.; *M. B. Bayer* 112 in National Herbarium, Pretoria (type).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my thanks to the following people who have assisted me in the presentation of this note:



PLATE IX. *Haworthia limifolia* var. *gigantea*, M. B. Bayer.



Fig. 1. *Hemaphysalis limicola* Marl (Mocvaan River form) M. B. Bayer

Prof. R. H. Compton of the Swaziland Government Herbarium; Capt. D. R. Keith and Mr. P. T. Forbes of Stegi; Mr. A. F. Bruyns-Haylett of Pietermaritzburg; Prof. A. W. Bayer of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg; and particularly Dr. R. A. Dyer of the Division of Botany, Pretoria.

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